

# Landscape

MIDDLE EAST JULY 2020







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# EDITOR'S NOTE

In this issue,

The Summer issue of Landscape ME includes highlights from urban planning and landscape projects in Russia, Germany, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. We start with Rotterdam-based firm DROM in collaboration with Strelka KB who undertook a recent renovation project of the main Azatlyk Square in the Russian city of Naberezhnye Chelny (Republic of Tatarstan, Russia), transforming the square into a dynamic and vibrant multi-use public space. (Page 22)

Then we skip over to the German city of Wedemark to get an inside look at the futuristic design of Kirsch Pharma HealthCare's new factory and headquarters designed by South African-based architectural firm SAOTA, who constructed a building that stood as a sculptural object in the landscape, making a strong architectural statement that imparted a sense of presence and identity in its own right, according to the designers. (Page 28)

An equally forward-thinking project is the New Alamein City project on Egypt's North Coast. It's been designed as a fourth-generation city with a new public waterfront at its core a rarity in Egypt. See page 12 for images of the proposed city. Staying in the region, we visit a new project in Riyadh, called LANDFORM House, its namesake can be attributed to its landscape strategy, which is to employ a formal vocabulary culled from the study of the region's past indigenous civilization, the Nabateans. The residence recreates a complete ecosystem in order to protect, improve and help the proliferation of local wildlife by enhancing biodiversity in a dense desert city. Page 16

We hope you enjoy the issue and please share any new projects or feedback with us on [admin@landscape-me.com](mailto:admin@landscape-me.com)

We hope you enjoy the issue!

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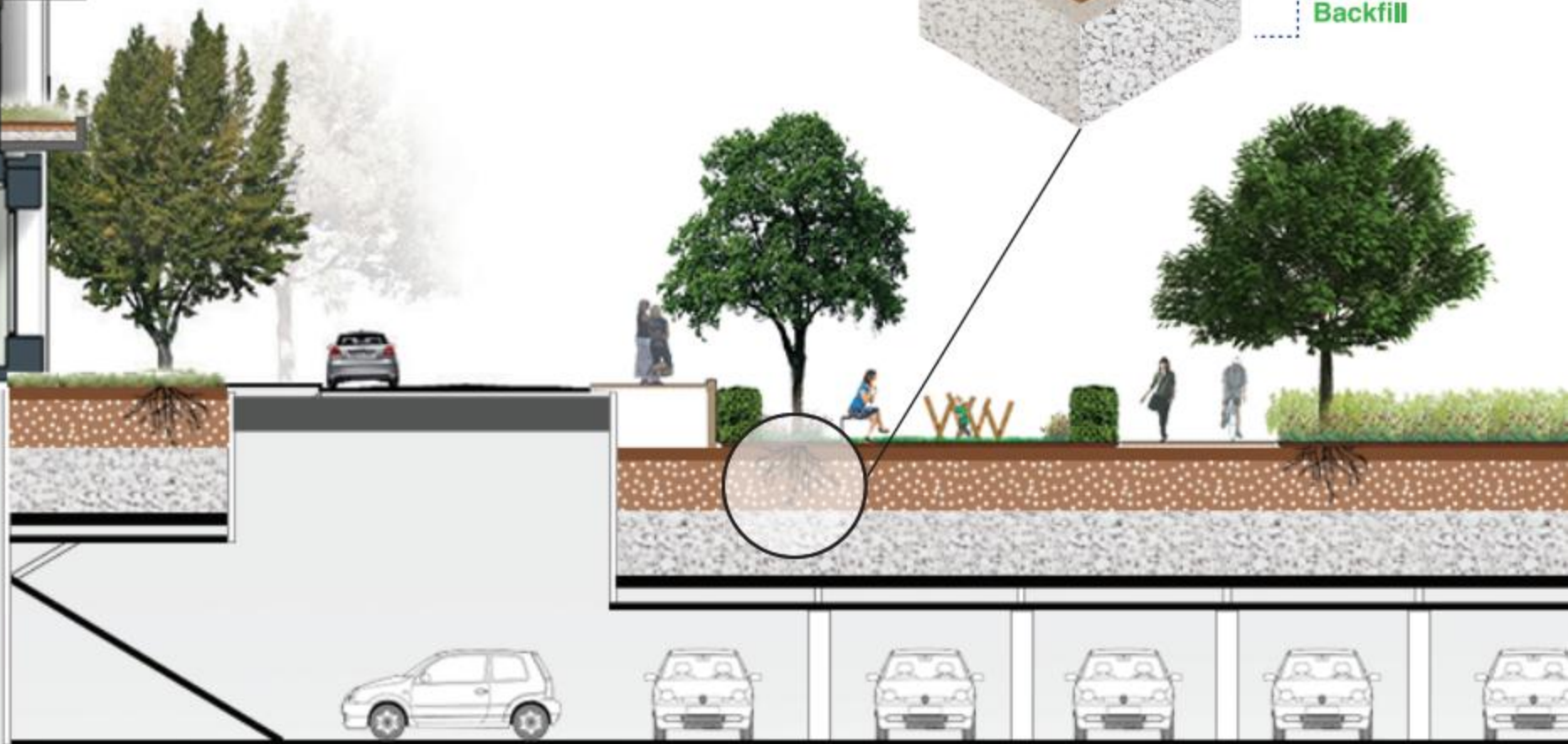
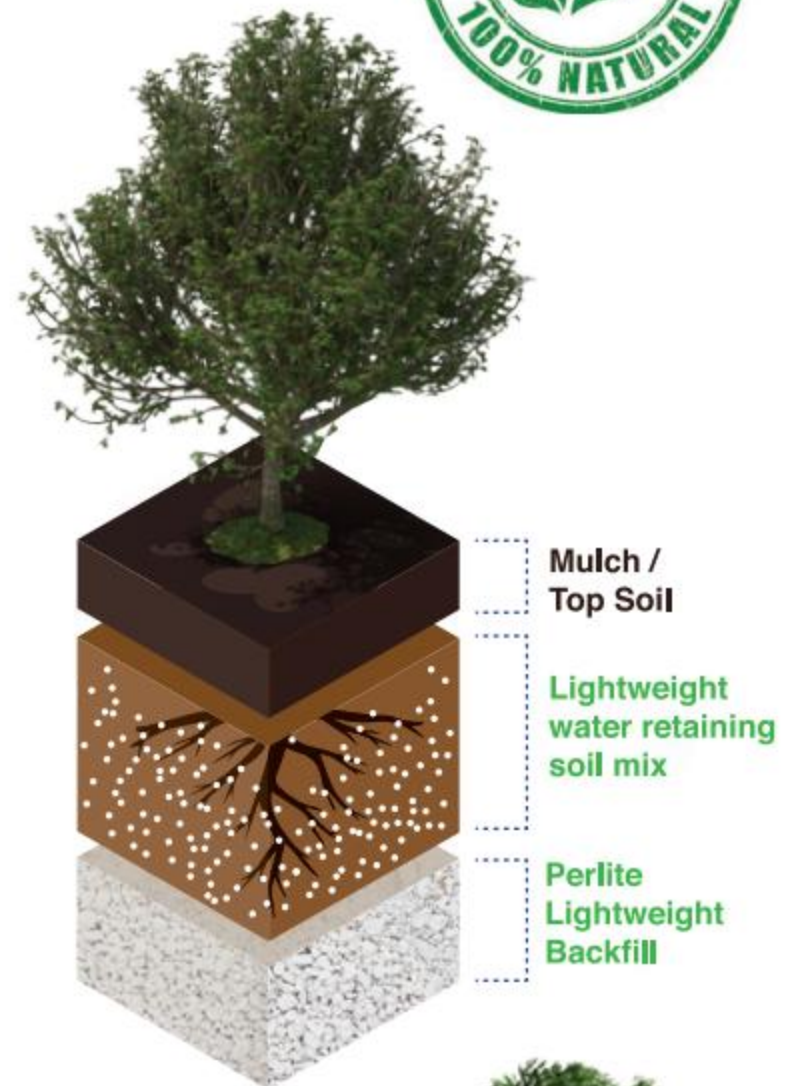




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# Riyadh's Green Highway

A collaboration between landscape architects and urban planners to create better spaces and design

By: Tina Heers  
Landscape Architect







The development of a city, town or a neighbourhood relies heavily on the initial programming and spatial planning stage of the project dictated by the local authorities and their future of the city. The consideration of factors such as economics, land use, transportation, recreation, education, history, and habitat, often lead to a willingly successful vision for the final planning framework.

With the absence of early collaborative efforts between the authorities and landscape architects and urban designers it is even more important that there is a collective collaboration strategy between the two design disciplines. Typically, landscape architects act as separate consultants to the urban planners and further progress the masterplan once the planners have fully conceptualized the design vision of the development. What will happen if landscape architects and planners were to work hand in hand from the initial planning stages of the masterplan? Would this create a more successful space for the community in the overall design of the city?

Our team at InSite, a division of KEO International Consultants, is comprised of a blend of urban designers, planners and landscape architects who constantly collaborate during each stage of the masterplanning process through to the final landscape design. It is clear that

key drivers in the success of any project in the studio is to ensure that teammates from each discipline are involved.

A successful InSite project, where both disciplines worked in collaboration, was The Green Riyadh Highway. This project located in Riyadh in Saudi Arabia consists of 4 main roads; Airport Road, King Salman Road, King Khalid Road and Jeddah Road. The highway landscape retrofit design was proposed to support the Saudi Vision 2030 and to prepare for the G20 summit which is to be held in November of this year. The Saudi Vision proposes to be the heart for the Arab and Islamic Worlds, the investment powerhouse and the hub connection of three continents. The three

main themes of the vision are to promote a vibrant society, a thriving economy and create an ambitious nation.

These are exciting times for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as it is undergoing a modern-day renaissance. The society is looking to diversify its economy and this is having a profound impact on the Kingdom's relationship to the world. A robust landscape framework which balances visual delight and ecological diversity will be an important asset to Riyadh in communicating to its citizens, visitors, and fellow countrymen that the Kingdom is a leader on the global stage. The benefits of a well-considered landscape strategy that transforms highways and other travel





## URBAN DEVELOPMENT



routes into scenic and functional habitats have benefits that reach far beyond the roadside. Highway landscape design has the potential to increase tree canopy dramatically and biodiversity that establishes citywide ecological corridors.

The first concept draws upon the Elemental Heritage of Saudi Arabia, “In order to understand a future we must understand the past that grounds it”. The importance of culture, ecology, history, architecture, and terrain is key in the development of the city. Bringing these factors through the new design of the city ensures that the historical and cultural elements do not get lost within modernity and the city moving forward. The concept focuses on 4 key elements; Fire, Earth, Water and Wind and how to balance these through the highway design.

The second concept is focused on the balance between ecology and technology and how these two can come together through shape, form, and function. The concept highlights the balance between light pollution and biodiversity focusing more on the ecosystems of the region rather than over saturating the highway with street lighting. Sustainable design and green technologies such as those which incorporate solar and wind and energy are adapted along the highway to benefit the environment and creating a substantial gain on efficiency.

The urban planning team and landscape team at InSite worked hand in hand to interpret the overall 2030 vision as well as the Green Riyadh vision which outlines the reforestation



of Riyadh. Both these complementary programs promote a healthy lifestyle for its citizens while creating strategies that will result in the beautification and amplification of the key routes the delegates will travel upon.

The urban planning and landscape teams initially mapped out the areas along the highway that would include open spaces, prioritized parks, and districts for greening as well as natural ecosystems. This was followed by determining locations of feature art points and streets that would tie into the Riyadh Art Plan for the city.

Through multiple workshops and design charrettes between the teams, an analysis of the site was created that would improve the outcome of the design. The teams then agreed on the functions and journeys that the users were to have whilst travelling along the grand highway, creating a strong identity throughout the four major roads.

Guiding principals were put in place to set the framework for the final design concept to be applied. These guidelines were based on the design language of the site to be community driven, to be enhanced by the context surrounding the highway, celebration of diversity, enhancing ecology, to create a sense of place and to tie in with the Saudi Vision 2030 with the G20 as its first target.

Following the guiding principles and the research completed based on the location and context of the site and the understanding of the citizens, the InSite team proposed two strong design concepts for the highway; ensuring that the story behind the designs were both culturally sensitive, functional and elegant in their own way.

The movement along the G20 route is a cinematic one that strengthens the connection between the people and the places they share and use. Each segment of the roads has its own character and quality that promotes this connection while maintaining a collective positive impression whilst promoting and ecological environment.

The InSite team, both planners and landscape architects agreed that the most important factor for both concepts would be to increase biodiversity in the urban landscape along the highway for conservation and contribute to the health of the city. The team came up with the idea of the 'Superfood for G20 Highway'. This would include increasing the tree canopy coverage along the highway sufficiently, creating bird habitats as well as a wildlife corridor, creating a groundwater recharge system along the stretch, introducing sustainable urban drainage and introducing a new ways in which to clean polluted water naturally.



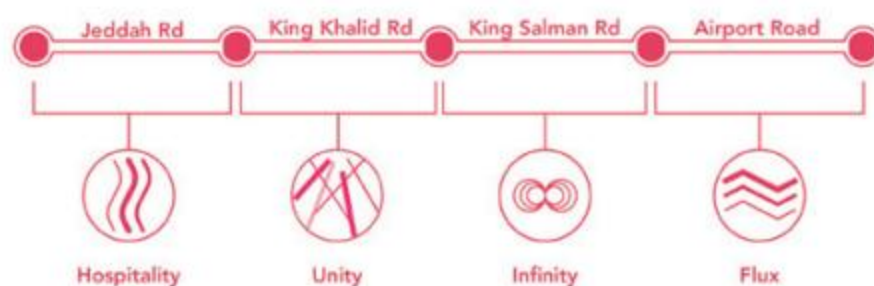
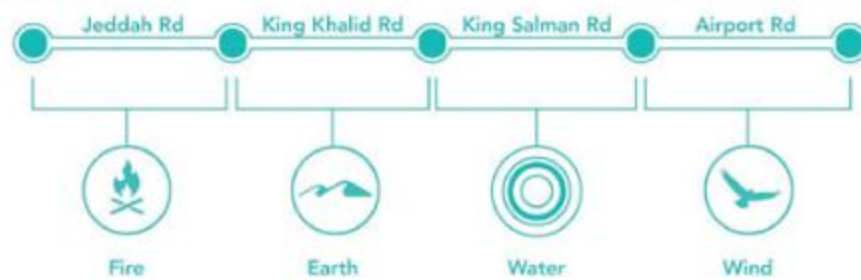


As part of a growing city both the planning and landscape team at InSite researched and looked at ways how the citizens of Riyadh and visitors of the site could appreciate and understand the importance of the existing ecology, culture and history and the contextual parameters around the roads and celebrate these factors through the proposed design of the G20 highway to shed light on the importance upon the old and the new alike.

Through this project, the Insite Team discovered that collaboration between both planning and landscape was mandatory moving forward on projects of the future. The complexities of resilience planning in landscape architecture and urban design is critical for the design and planning of upcoming cities. Factors such as smart cities, climate control, ecological systems and sustainability are key in evolving the cities that we live in whilst focusing on the health and wellbeing of the population. The need for collaboration is essential between planners and landscape architects to develop a broader way of thinking and to combine certain aspects that both disciplines succeed at. We need to create a model that draws upon lessons learned from flourishing cities which incorporate such aspects as successful transport systems, safety, ecologically sustainable and cities that are financially viable.

Overall, the integrated InSite team was able to achieve the client's objectives by working together on a cohesive approach and intertwining their individually unique skills as one. The strength of the design solutions emerged out of the discourse and research of understanding the region, the city and the districts as part of a larger

set of ideas beyond simply a "site". The narratives that emerged out of this study allowed the design solutions to be locally and regionally attuned. This project was a great case study in the power of collaboration, building upon each other's strengths and these lessons learned have been taken forth and applied to future projects. ■







# Murouj urban park will bloom again

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By: Ricardo Camacho





While it currently lies empty due to soaring temperatures and the global pandemic, the Murouj dining and entertainment centre in Kuwait is a benchmark of new development in the city. Designed by locally based Portuguese architecture firm, Proem Architects and developed for Jazeera Real Estate on behalf of the Public Authority for Youth and Sport, the building and landscape design for the third phase expansion of the original complex was inaugurated earlier in this decade. The landscape, developed by Sara Machado and Matteo Zamagni, includes an urban park with 49,000sqm and diverse facilities comprising of an amusement park with 5,000sqm, a multipurpose hall with 2,000sqm, a restaurant complex with 18 units and a large surface parking for 500 cars. The site is located between Kuwait Equestrian Center, the Horse Racecourse and Sahara Golf Course Resort. The developer Jazeera Real Estate built and operates the Murouj Phases II and III comprising restaurants complex and children's entertainment large indoor facility.





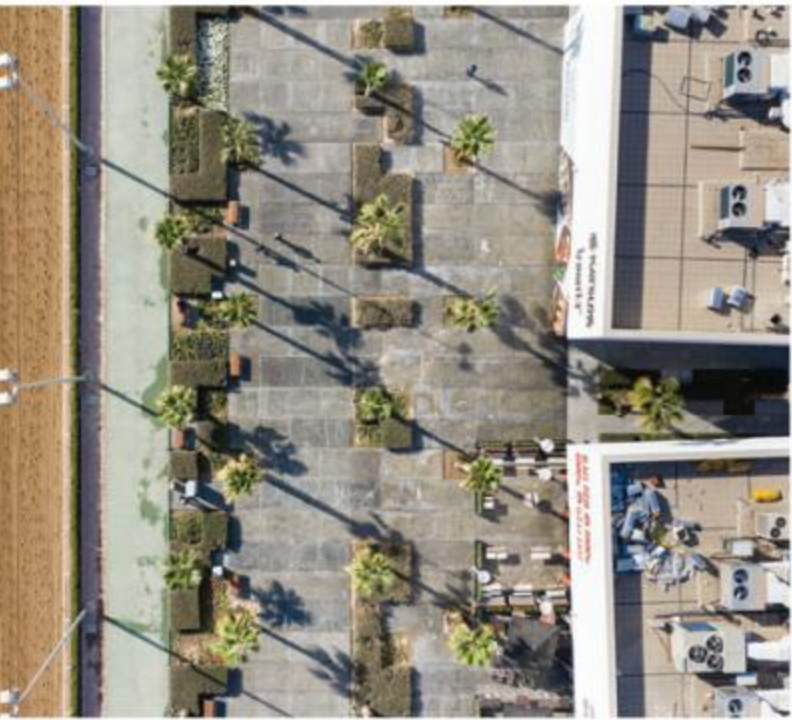
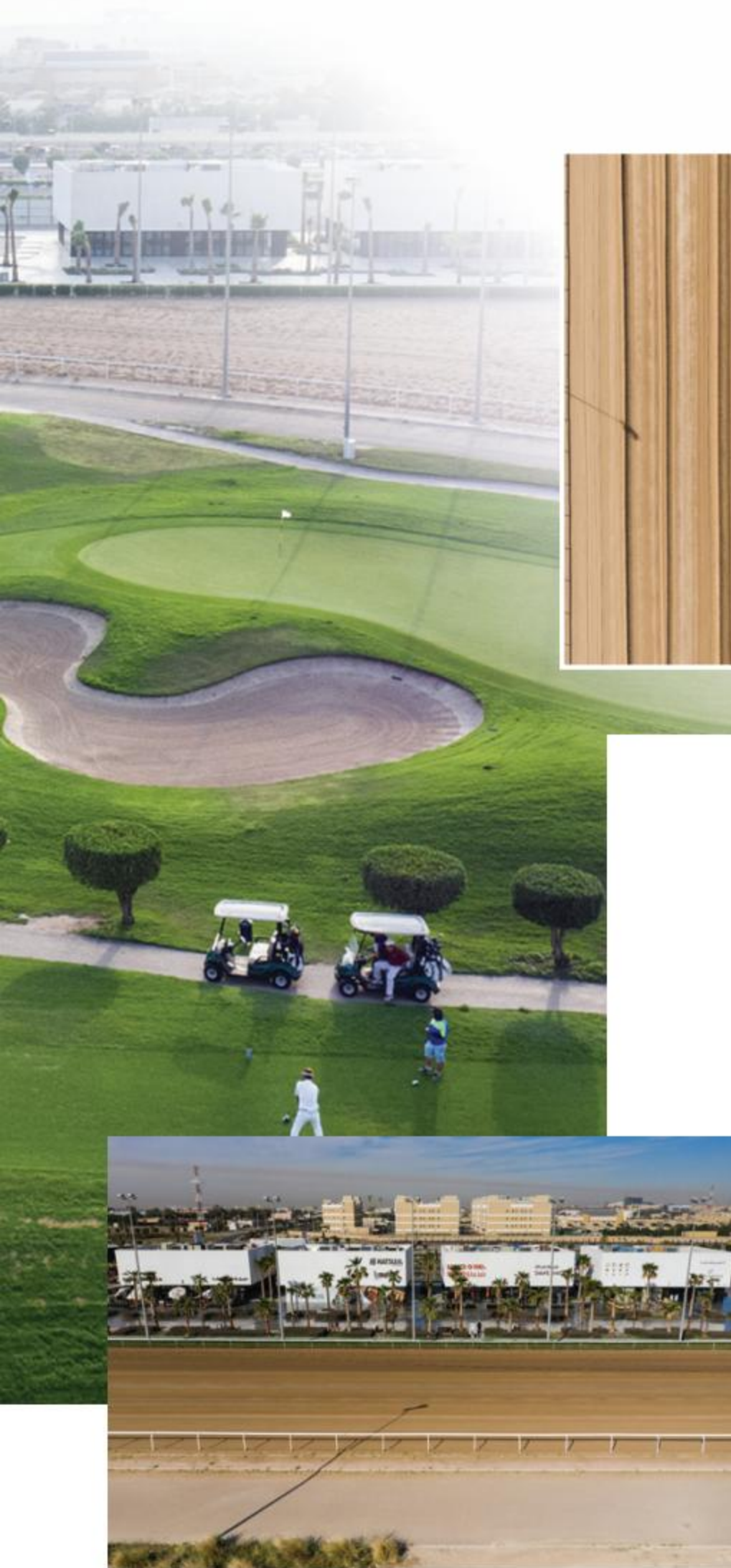
# URBAN DEVELOPMENT



- 01 Promenade
- 02 Jogging Track
- 03 Multipurpose Landscape
- 04 Ring Fence Garden
- 05 Sports Fields
- 06 Playground
- 07 Garden of Senses
- 08 Amphitheater
- 09 Stage
- 10 Amusement Park
- 11 Serenity Garden
- 12 Mounding Landscape
- 13 Parking
- 14 Existing Muruj
- 15 Restaurants
- 16 Multipurpose
- 17 Administration







The project was developed and implemented in a record time of 12 months, between 2017-2018. The design process was determined and strongly affected by the precedent strategic and material value of the 1969-72 never accomplished proposal of Peter and Alison Smithson for the city's greenbelt, the "Rampart and Dune Gardens". The water resources determined a limit to the vegetation and plantation capacity. The soil movement was instrumental in recreating along the site the region's biodiversity, including saline water depressions and Acacia woodlands. The native vegetation scheme responded to water consumption restrictions, the harsh environmental conditions and urban maintenance practices. This movement integrates the buildings in the given matrix and accommodates the selection of a native vegetation. ■

The landscape proposal uses a regular grid that distributed all the programmatic outdoor and indoor events –the buildings– that will be then converted into sound barriers – the noise protection-and the visual impact of the surroundings. At a larger degree, this grid is a medium climate mitigating wind, noise, dust and sun orientation. It generates a referential that is able to recognize the existing hippodrome and golf course limits, as well as providing connections between all proposed elements through the main promenade, visitors path and jogging track.

Project by:

PROEM Architects + Stroop Landscape

Author: Ricardo Camacho, OA 13012; Sara Machado, OA 15446

Design Team: Matteo Zamagni, Hugo Ferreira, Sara Saragoca, Nuno Sequeira, Filipa Almeida, Antonio Zamora, Flavio Silva, Nouf Almayyal, Sarah Behbehani, Abdulaziz Al Khandari.

Engineering Team: Structure: Al Farooqi Engineering Consultants Bureau; MEP: Eng. Anas Mustafa Hajeer, Eng. Mohamad Shhailty, Eng. Hatem Sharaf ; Lighting Design: Atelier33

Photographer: Nelson Garrido



Egypt's first public commercial waterfront complex is located in new coastal city



# The New Alamein City- Egypt's New Future City on the Mediterranean Sea



By: Sarah Reda  
Head of landscape department at  
YBA architect

The New Alamein City is located on Egypt's North Coast and stretches for 48 kilometers along the International Alexandria – Matrouh Road. It's been designed to accommodate millions of residents and has been described as a fourth-generation city with a new public waterfront at its core.

A new 52-acre public waterfront will form the cornerstone of the city, representing a different approach by the government of "an open-to-the-public" city for Egyptians rather than investing solely in private resorts and hotels for foreigners.

The public waterfront is considered a solution to improve the urban context of a coastal city that generally suffers from land uses poor distribution.



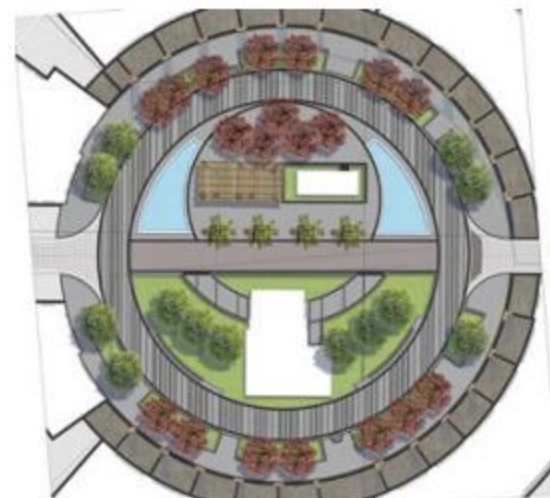
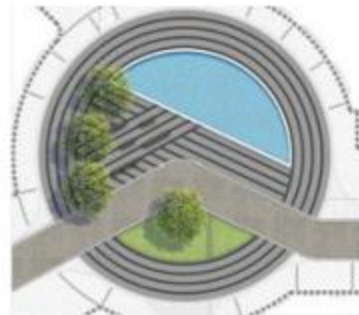
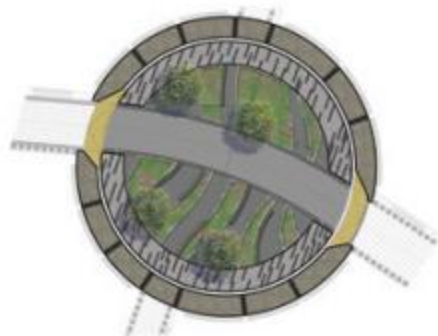


*Project description from a master plan perspective*

and the sea view to emphasizing that there are visual axes of spaces.

There are three main corridors in the project:

The first corridor is the promenade, which is by the seaside and is divided into two parts. The first one is a bike lane, and the second one is for pedestrians. In addition, public activities can be performed on the beach.



**Project description from a master plan perspective**

The project includes 8 main semi-public spaces with different sizes that have accessibility from the main boulevard of new Alamein city and the promenade by the sea. The form of these spaces mainly relied on the formation of buildings in a geometrical design, inspired by the formation of Al Moez Street in old Cairo city.

Where the success of the space design depends on satisfying the needs of the user, from providing seating areas and shading places with the provision of the aesthetic element represented in the fountains, softscape,

As for the second corridor, it is a commercial corridor surrounded by the shops.

While the third corridor, is adjacent to the main boulevard of the city of the new El Alamein and is considered the main access for the project. Through which the skyline of the city can be seen.

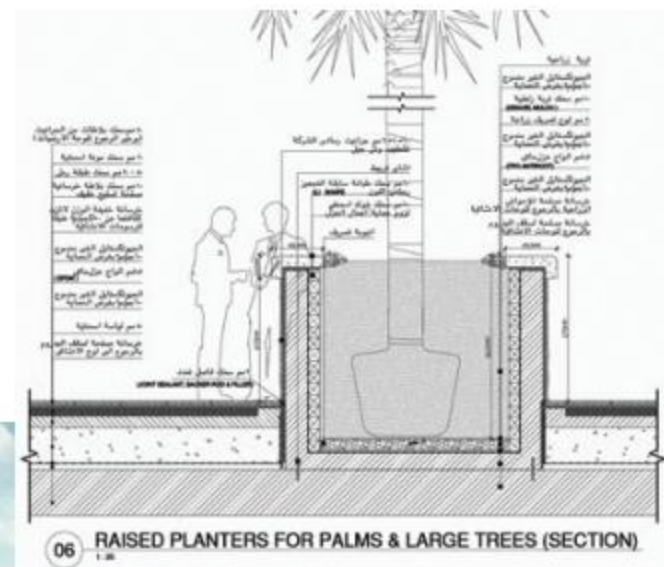


## WATERFRONTS



### Design challenges

One of the design challenges was designing the landscape on a concrete roof and designing levels for surface drainage. In addition, planting and providing the appropriate depth for the planting soil, also providing irrigation networks. As a result, the ultimate solution was to provide a layer of 60 cm depth of lightweight concrete, as shown in the section below.



### Considerations in Developing Structural Systems for roof space

As much as designing the project on the rooftop of a parking lot was interesting, there were several aspects that needed to be taken into consideration. These aspects directly affected the selection of the structural system of the project. Below are the main factors that were considered:

- Geotechnical considerations
- Soil bearing capacity
- Material selection and availability

- Weight of materials such as:
- Soil
- Vegetation
- Water
- Paving
- Landscape Components

### Hardscape:

The project is distinguished by the local granite paving, which has been chosen for durability, its resistance to slip or wear and color permanence, especially in coastal areas.





### Softscape:

The coast is a hostile environment for softscape. The challenges that the vegetation on the seaside has to contend were primarily the wind, sand, and salt. These factors play a major role in determining the design of the coastal landscape managing them is far easier than trying to change them. So, the plants were chosen based on the above, which were successfully planted in the coastal environment, and the below are some examples for the chosen plants:

- Date palm
- Washingtonia filifera
- Araucaria excelsa
- Schinus molle
- Concarpus erectus
- Tecomaria capensis
- Bougainvillea Pink Pix
- Lantana new Gold
- Carrissa macrocarpa
- Pennisetum setaceum



Client: Egyptian Ministry of Housing  
Project: Al Alamein Waterfront Complex  
Design consultant: YBA Architects  
Location: New Alamein- Egypt  
Site Area: 52 Acres

### Outdoor lighting design:

The heart of the lighting design challenge was to eliminate any obstruction from the vertical lighting fixtures, while as the same time create a pedestrian experience that complements the design features using light.

As a result, the solution was to rely mainly on lighting the spaces in the project using floodlight lighting units installed on the top of the buildings. Where it is

characterized by its great ability to spread and maximize the space covered with light. While at the same time ensuring anti-glare properties to eliminate any strain on the user's vision.

YBA's Al Alamein Complex won the Cityscape Retail Project Award in 2019 with the design being the first commercial area waterfront, spreading over 1 KM, and created for the Egyptian Ministry of Housing. ■





LANDFORM House, an inhabited landscape:

# How to build sustainably in the desert

By: ADIB DADA  
Lead Architect / Founder

Landform House is an example of an inhabited  
landscape turned into a garden paradise

Located in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, LANDFORM house is characterized by its landscape Strategy, and employing a formal vocabulary culled from the study of the region's past indigenous civilization, the Nabateans. The residence recreates a complete ecosystem in order to protect, improve and help the proliferation of local wildlife by enhancing biodiversity in a dense desert city.

LANDFORM house, inspired by the Nabatean settlement of Mada'in Saleh, is a reinterpretation of the Garden of Paradise. The structure of the residence has a serpentine form, starting with a series of planted terraces that articulate a spatial experience leading to an accessible roof: Three garden typologies (Janna, Bustan and Rawda), inspired by the traditional Islamic garden, unwind in a procession gradually





*Stepped garden trail leading to family room then rooftop*



*Initial Project  
Render | An  
unwinding spatial  
experience*

revealing the totality of the residence while remaining completely immersed in it, unveiling programmatic spaces engulfed within the landform.

Employing a formal vocabulary culled from the study of the Nabateans, the region's past indigenous civilization, LANDFORM draws its inspiration from the land-embedded monuments they left behind.

Green before their time (500 BC), the NABATEANS perfected water collection and storage through the use of local materials and underground cisterns in the desert they inhabited. They used the landscape as their

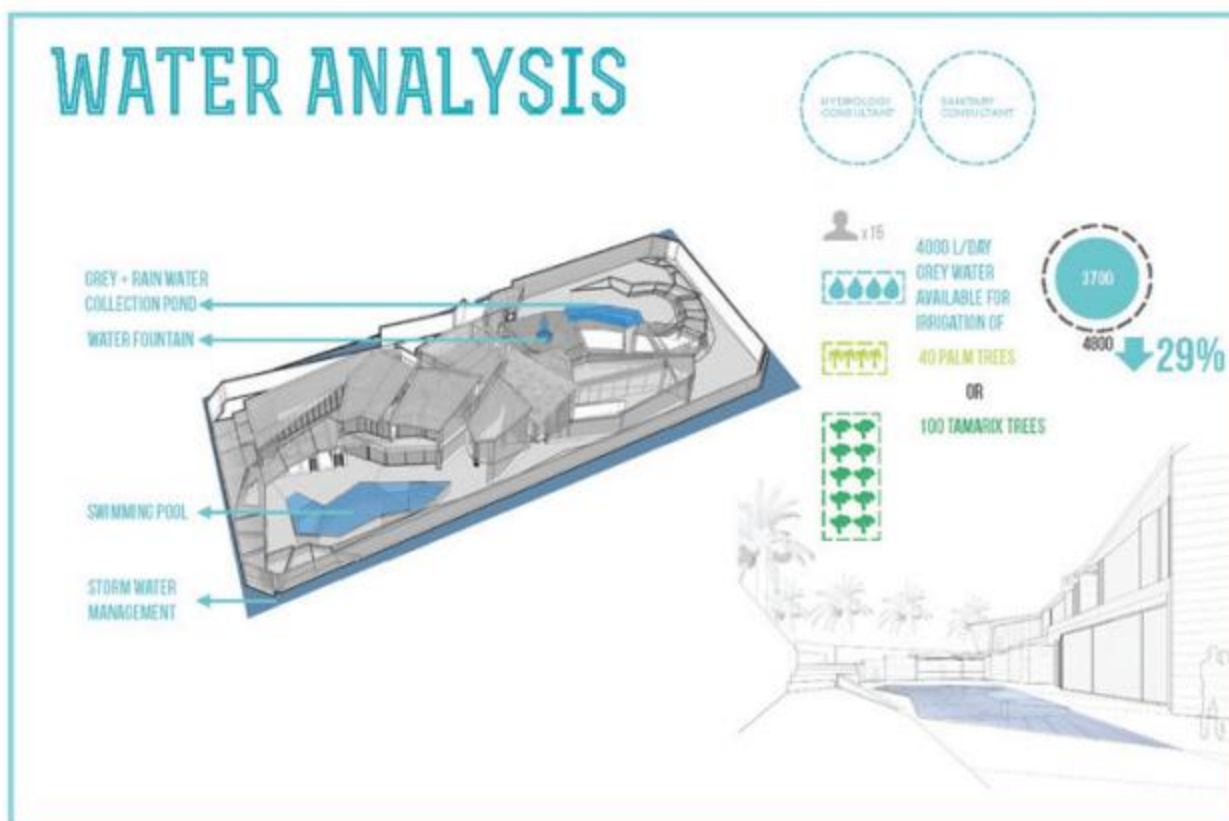
fortress, cunningly working in and within the earth to create camouflaged structures, unrecognizable to all but themselves. Our proposed scheme draws its inspiration from the land-embedded monuments they left behind. Local natural materials are used to translate landscape into architecture, creating a residence that appears to be carved out of the earth and rising from the ground. A series of planted terraces constitute the accessible roof of the serpentine structure, leading an ascending progression of different landscapes and architectural elements to create diverse micro-climates, thus extending the cooler



## SUSTAINABILITY



Cross-referencing fauna and flora



Water analysis and budget

season. Starting at ground level and evenly rising before connecting back to the ground, these platforms move the viewer along the entire length of the project. A winding procession through these gradually reveals the totality of the residence, unveiling programmatic spaces adjacent and below, seemingly engulfed within the landform. Architecture and landscape are merged and seemingly

weaved into each other, creating an environment of total immersion. The line between the natural and the artificial is blurred as the family moves in-between, under, on, or through the structure.

The design of the residence combines environmental, traditional and social conventions that meet the needs of Saudi Arabia's contemporary way of living.





*Water fountain from office space below*

WATER CONSUMPTION is first reduced by specifying water-efficient fixtures, and also recycled from various points; grey water is collected, recycled and used for irrigation. The project is anchored by two water features: the permanent CHEMICAL-FREE POOL and the SEASONAL POND, sized to collect the precious total annual rainfall from the site. It mimics the oasis and cools its surroundings through an evaporative cooling process.

Employing a REVERSE LANDSCAPING strategy, native and drought-tolerant plants were selected and quantified based on their water needs. Landscaped areas are irrigated solely using grey water, making the amount of grey water available a determinant in the choice and number of plant species. The grey water produced by the household is treated on-site and released into the ground, diverting wastewater from the municipal sewage system. The landscaped area is



*Chemical-free pool*



## **SUSTAINABILITY**



*LANDFORM house, an inhabited landscape*

designed and the choice of fauna is calculated in relation to this daily WATER BUDGET.

The strength of LANDFORM house lies in its ecosystem approach. Extensive research and CROSS-REFERENCING OF LOCAL FLORA and FAUNA is conducted in order to choose appropriate native trees and shrubs that will attract a maximal number of birds and urban pollinators to the site. Migratory species are also studied that travel to and feed in the region are also studied, as Riyadh is located on an important bird migratory path. A complete ecosystem is then recreated, protecting, improving and helping the proliferation of local wildlife. Our aim is to be able to replicate this approach on different sites. With two other similar projects under construction in close proximity in Riyadh, the goal is to allow for wildlife to jump from one project to the other, enhancing the overall biodiversity in an otherwise dense desert city.

The programmatic spaces are broken up at the heart of the structure using courtyards and passages, creating a guided procession through the space and an effective separation between public, private, semi-private and service spaces. The family therefore receive generous NATURAL LIGHT within spaces that are open yet completely private. ENERGY CONSUMPTION is significantly reduced and produced by RENEWABLE resources. Photovoltaic panels are integrated into the design of the project for on-site energy production, informing its formal language and generating its form in certain areas. This is apparent in the four roofs on the eastern edge of the site, oriented south and sloped at an optimal 25 degrees for maximum energy generation. CFD and ENVIRONMENTAL SIMULATION were used to inform the shape of the building to optimize energy production and enhance ventilation.

The harsh desert climate is mitigated using classical regional design features such as NARROW ALLEYS



*Amphitheater-style seating overlooking the pool*

offering shade and echoing the alleys of the traditional medina. NATURAL VENTILATION is achieved by mimicking the Malkaf, a traditional wind catcher. Reinterpreted as a hybrid ventilation strategy, it is fitted with sensor-controlled mechanical louvers facing the northern prevailing winds, which operate when the conditions are just right.

LOCAL NATURAL MATERIALS are used to translate landscape into architecture, creating a residence that appears to be carved out of the earth, blurring the line between the natural and the artificial. The residence recreates a complete ecosystem in order to introduce, protect and improve the proliferation of local wildlife by enhancing biodiversity in the dense desert city.

PRIVACY is a crucial and cultural requirement in Riyadh. The LANDFORM house fence is not a dissociated element, but rather an integral part of the architecture itself, blurring the boundaries between the obligatory fence, the house and the landscape. The residence is INWARDLY-ORIENTED, punctured on the exterior by narrow slits. Reminiscent of the clefts in local tribes' rock settlements, these cracks provide views onto the exterior while reducing exposure to





Reception canyon

neighbours. The programmatic spaces open to the exterior using courtyards and shaded alleys, creating an effective separation between public, private and service spaces.

Stemming from the different needs of the desert, SUSTAINABLE TECHNIQUES were carefully embedded into the overall architecture. Occupants receive generous natural light within spaces that are strategically open and yet completely private.

All exterior and interior materials were carefully selected, and exterior walls are clad in the locally-sourced Riyadh stone to reduce transportation cost and impact. The stone is rough-hewn then grooved, adding a definite man-made quality to it. The cladding is mechanically fixed to allow for natural air insulation and easy maintenance. Interior walls are insulated using natural MINERAL WOOL insulation, HDPE pipes (replacing PVC), water-based paints, NON-TOXIC & LOW VOC interior finishes are specified to ensure healthy indoor quality and reduce the impact on the environment. All EXCAVATED ROCKS were crushed on site to fill landscaped areas (instead of using grass), reducing water costs and as well as diverting it from the landfill. ■



Planted guard's house



Main entrance alley cooled by shallow waterfall

Type: Residential

Area: 2500 sqm

Location: KSA

Status: Completed 2017

Recognition: BREEAM Certified, Very Good [Interim Design Phase]

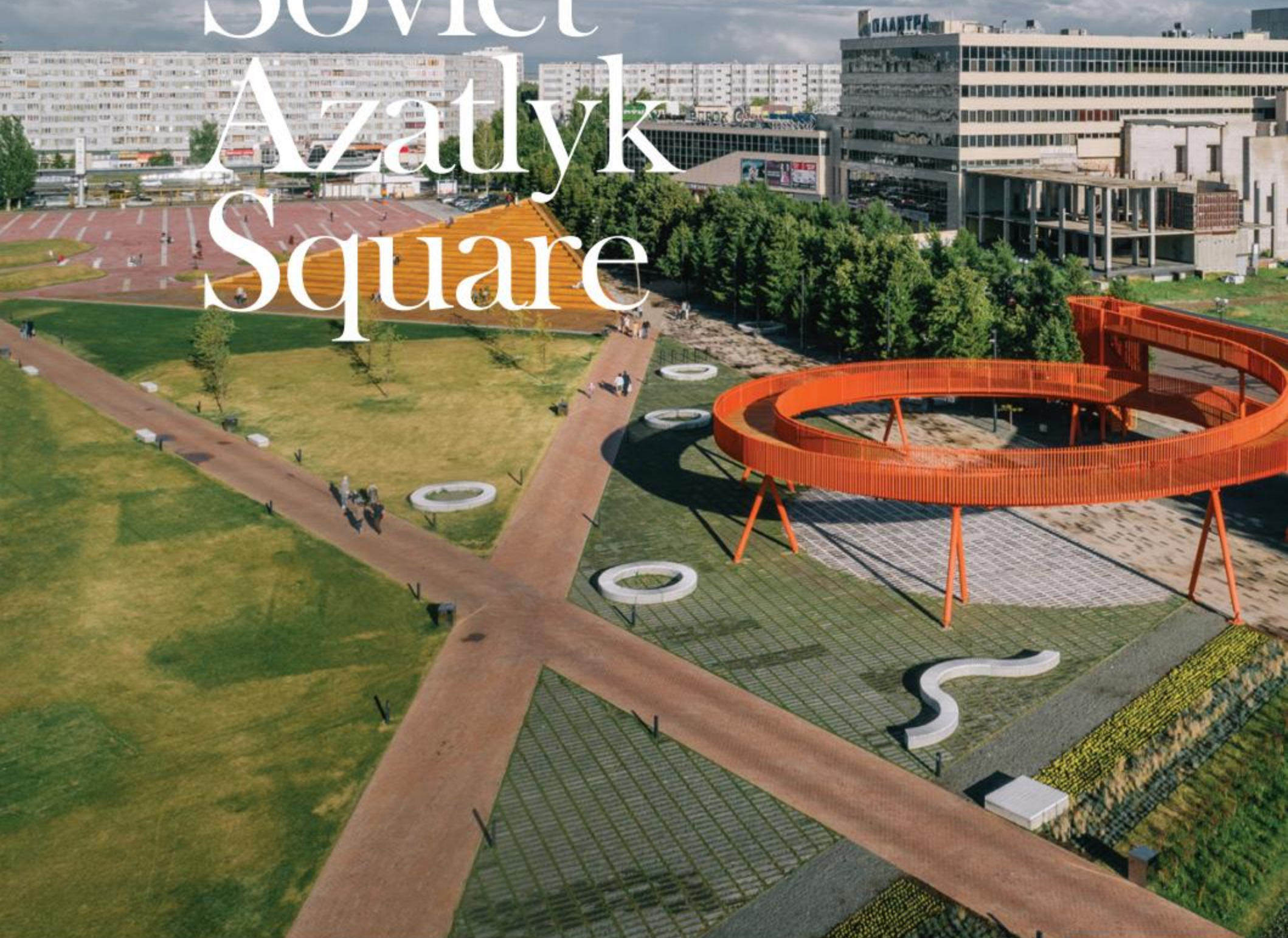
Sub Services: Architecture, Interior Design, Landscape Design by theOtherDada

MEP, Environmental studies and CFD analysis by SEEDS Intl.

Structural studies by Nabil Hennaoui



# Soviet Azatlyk Square



DROM converts the monotone park into a lively contemporary public space

By: DROM

Rotterdam-based firm DROM in collaboration with Strelka KB undertook a recent renovation project of the main Azatlyk Square in the Russian city of Naberezhnye Chelny (Republic of Tatarstan, Russia), transforming the square into a dynamic and vibrant multi-use public space.







The original square was designed around a formal central axis that was intended to connect the municipality building to the unbuilt Lenin museum. By losing its starring role as a social connector, the public space became a relic of the Soviet past, underused, kept alive by a few maintenance interventions and disconnected from city life.

"We wanted to convert the lifeless public space of a typical Russian monotown built in the Seventies and dominated by a single industry – the famous Kamaz truck factory – into a multipurpose area with a fresh take on inhabitants' interaction" say Timur Karimullin, Sofia Koutsenko and Timur Shabaev, founders of DROM.



## PARK



Highlighted by a dense row of planted trees, the main axis of Azatlyk Square has been relocated towards the edge of the plot to directly connect the nearby neighbourhoods with the new Promenade and its pavilions that include diverse playgrounds, a café, a food stall and a spiral viewing platform. The former central area has been divided into three different squares, each with its own unique character. To the East, the Event Square is a pink concrete paved urban







space that is also used for weekly outdoor markets. Next to it, is the Green Square, a relaxing spot with a wooden amphitheatre and a broad lawn from which to enjoy the seasonal landscaping conducted by the city's planting department and lastly, the Cultural Square, with a fountain and a new circular shallow pool for playing in the water on hot days.

In dialogue with the Promenade, each square is energized by an anchor programme: the amphitheatre doubles as a café; the spiral viewing platform, which is painted in the emblematic orange Kamaz color, adds a vertical dimension; and the circular pool transforms into an ice-skating rink in winter.

DROM designed peculiar paving patterns for each of the squares and integrated spaces that are protected from the strong crosswinds and sun by strategically placed "hills" and local species of linden, red maple and blue spruce trees.



## **PARK**



In addition to the pavilions, Azatlyk Square features bespoke urban furniture and lighting elements, which were developed and produced by local manufacturers closely involved in the creation of a new niche in the city's economy.

The main supporting structure for the spiral viewing platform is made with the same technology that is utilized in the production of gas pipes. The benches were shaped by a local concrete factory and the lamps were fabricated using standard steel profiles. By maintaining most of the pre-existing

greenery and adding new trees, the architects intend to preserve the existing ecosystem and peculiar landscape. All these aspects helped the natural integration and the visual impact of the enormous transformation in the city centre, making the project more sustainable, resilient, and financially viable.

The city and its inhabitants embrace the new public space and the flourishing green areas as a stimulus to transform a monotone industrial past into a lively contemporary dimension of living that injects new energy into their roots. ■



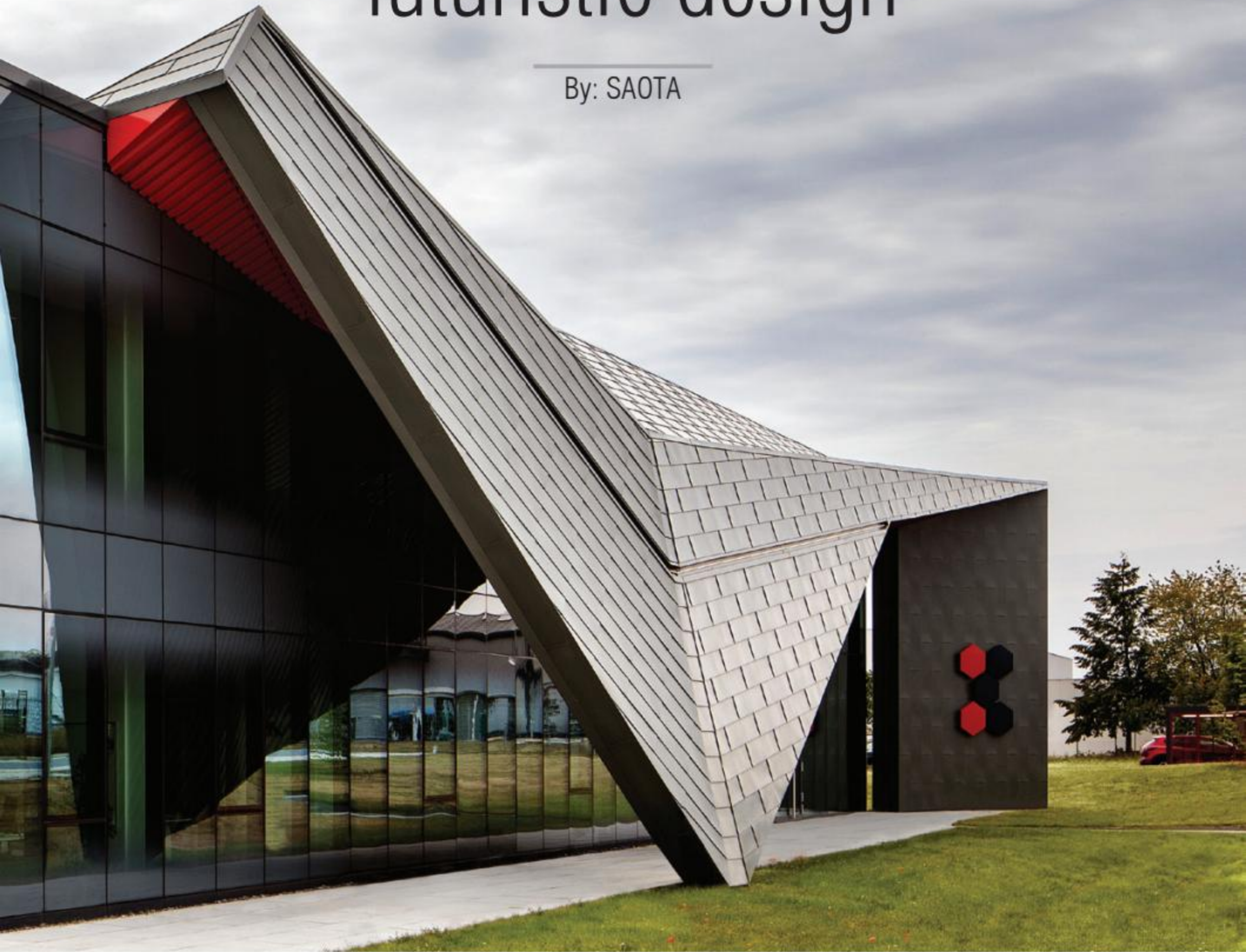


Commission: January 2017  
Design phase: January 2017 – April 2017  
Construction phase 1: Summer 2017 – Fall 2018  
Construction phase 2: Spring – Summer 2019  
Construction phase 3: 2020  
GFA: 7.8 Ha  
Building costs: approx. 4.500.000



# German Pharma company HQ inspired by bold, futuristic design

By: SAOTA



In their design for the new head office and production site for Kirsch Pharma HealthCare GmbH in Wedemark, Germany, SAOTA rethinks the often underwhelming and generic industrial prototype.





The site of German-based Kirsch Pharma HealthCare's new factory and headquarters in Wedemark, Germany, is a somewhat anonymous industrial zone without distinctive contextual cues. South African-based architectural firm SAOTA approached the project with the understanding that a meaningful architectural response to this environment would require a building that stood as a sculptural object in the landscape, making a strong architectural statement that

imparted a sense of presence and identity in its own right.

Kirsch Pharma HealthCare specialises in the production of finished pharmaceuticals and dietary supplements (oral dosage forms) for the pharmaceutical, nutritional, biotechnology, veterinary and cosmetic industries. In addition to an efficient state-of-the-art factory, the company also required a reception and office area that would articulate its ethos and identity while tying together the office and production facility. It also aimed to create an uplifting work environment for its employees while instilling in them a sense of institutional pride and wellbeing.

The design of the factory building was dictated largely by functional requirements and consists of a simple rectangular structure clad with light grey steel cassette walls forming a skirt or slightly projecting section of façade under which slips a layer of graphite grey-coloured trapezoidal sheeting. This façade treatment creates a sense of lightness to what

would otherwise appear monolithic, while dramatically incised lines across the façade's surface further break up its mass. The factory's positioning was carefully considered to allow room for future growth and expansion.

The adjacent office and reception building, on the other hand, required a departure from generic industrial forms – a welcoming and uplifting environment that would complement and express the nature of Kirsch Pharma HealthCare's activities while intelligently humanising its aims and advancing its purposes.

While the office area maintains an essentially rectangular form, and consists of a reception area, boardrooms rooms a conference room and offices, SAOTA contrasts the office building and the factory building with a striking sculptural canopy over its main face and entrance. This bold, futuristic form helps orientate visitors and guide them towards the arrival point while mediating the transition from exterior to interior.





## I INDUSTRIAL LANDSCAPE



The angular, faceted shape of the canopy, which wraps around the translucent triple-glazed glass curtain walling, translates elements of the company's brand identity and logo while borrowing from its colour palette, complementing and advancing its corporate identity with its landmark quality. Its swooping angular lines echo the incised lines of the factory building, which serves to unify the two buildings.

The dynamic, technologically inspired, futuristic form of the canopy conveys a sense of speed, confidence and innovation while the transparent curtain walling allows the building to glow invitingly like a jewel in the landscape in the dull grey environment and weather. The canopy articulates the advanced, progressive technological component of Kirsch Pharma HealthCare's activities, while the interior conveys the humanity and nurturing aspect of its mission.

The canopy's overhang not only provides shelter, but also brings human scale to the industrial setting and facilitates a welcoming transition into the building. The soffit's red ribbing is surprisingly expressive, with a highly textural quality that brings additional humanising detail on approach, while contrasting playfully with the monochromatic skies and architectural surroundings.

The contrast between the canopy's outer shell, in graphite grey-coloured zinc cladding and the red powder-coated custom-made aluminium soffit (which extends indoors and runs through the foyer to form a feature backdrop wall for the reception counter towards the rear of room) emphasises the warm and inviting quality of the interiors, imparting a conscious experience in visitors of being invited into Kirsch Pharma HealthCare's world. The



interior spaces of the office building are flexible, allowing the foyer and boardrooms to function as an event space when the company holds client receptions or other events.

The way in which the reception areas relate to the adjacent factory building draws together its image and activities, merging the industrial and client-facing elements of the business while creating a useful distinction with its contrasting light and dark facades.

The fact that Kirsch Pharma HealthCare's office building is outward looking, as opposed to the generally inward-looking factory buildings, also sets it apart, allowing natural light into the interior while providing views that facilitate a sense of connection to its park-like landscaped setting. The shifting natural light serves as a natural marker of the day's progress, which brings a natural dimension to the generally artificial context.

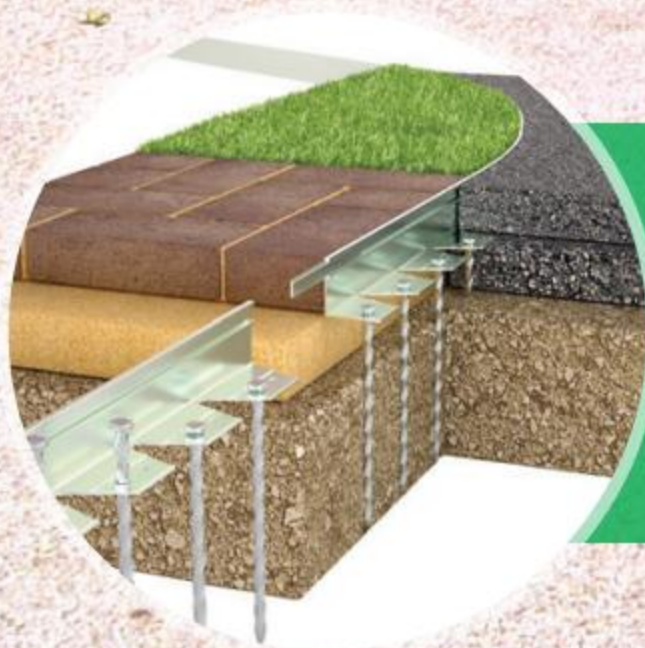
Through its graphic quality and bold use of colour, the signature feature of Kirsch Pharma HealthCare's canopy and office building creates a narrative that translates the company ethos into aesthetic expression – the landscaping, architecture and interior design tell a story while stretching the possibilities of industrial architecture. ■







Rite EDGE



Rite Edge is the multi-award winning aluminium lawn edging system designed by landscape architects which keeps that pristine neat garden appearance with perfect straight, corners and enviable curves and shapes around borders, lawns and pathways.



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# A new model of Conservation for heritage EU landscapes

The Project “eco\_corridors” by topio7 scooped the top prize at the national architectural-landscape design competition for the Regeneration and Reuse of former lignite mines in the Western Macedonia region” by the Public Power Corporation of Greece.

The project “eco\_corridors” has also been awarded with First Prize in various International Exhibitions (Italia, Serbia, EUROPE 40 UNDER 40 -award - 2017-2018). This innovative big scale landscape design competition - the first of its kind in Greece - required architects to redesign an 188ha former lignite mining site that had been abandoned. The site consists of a 3.5 kilometers long longitudinal zone and of 250-850 meters wide, between the villages of Karyochori and Aghios Christoforos in Ptolemaida. The site was composed by two sub-areas: 1) the zone that has been affected by lignite mining activity and storage of materials and has been restored, and 2) the grounds that were not excavated as they served as a safety buffer zone.

The current typical inland landscape of Western Macedonia, although changed through manmade actions, has preserved its beauty with dominant natural elements and interesting views. It is however, characterized by fragmentation, access difficulty and discontinuities. The idea for the landscape was to lightly enhance the environment and aesthetically improve the overall area, making it an attractive public place that encouraged people to spend time there.

“eco corridors” redesigns the area “with nature” in mind, highlighting its virtues and restoring its vulnerabilities. The aim of the proposal is to preserve the atmosphere of this post-industrial landscape rethinking it as a new uses’ area in order to become a public pole through its environmental, economic and social transformation. The main design intention was the integration of a system of connections from the large scale of the landscape, to the intermediate scale of the individual sites, to the small scale of the construction and visitor areas.

The proposal uses tools, strategies and contemporary ecological practices such as: (a) enhancing biodiversity and eco-connectivity; (b) sustainability in water network management; (c) evolution through time (d) spatial organization of movements and stops, (e) the introduction of new uses of a local and super local character.

The interpretation of the existing section and natural topography has played a significant role, emphasizing the special spatial qualities of the place. The vacant space between the landscape areas has been considered as a spatial and ecological virtue to be maintained. The movement and rest area network have been designed to be embedded in the topography providing various experiences between enclosed and extrovert areas and viewpoints.

The concept derives from the longitudinal site’s shape that could function as an ecological corridor. The need for environmental enrichment and biodiversity, has led to a





system of fluxes that organizes spatial relationships and connects habitats. The resulting landscape is being crossed by a series of ecological itineraries – the 'eco corridors' with different characters, qualities and uses: cultural uses, sport - leisure facilities, agricultural uses that offer economic benefits.

The proposal is structured in various landscape zones and intermediate transition zones with characterized spatial identities such as:

The **Athletic Park** (sports activities, racing circuit in the forest, playgrounds, recreation, parking). The **Spectacles'** place (amphitheater embedded in the landscape, existing motocross) The mixed **Conifer forest** (net of movement and rest areas - picnic areas, belvederes). The **Cultivations** (extensive timber, nurseries, fruit trees, ecological orchards) The **Riparian forest** (net of movement, rest areas - picnic areas, social games, recreation)

The **Central meadow** (lineal garrigue gardens, places for social happenings, clearings of natural regeneration, outdoor activities, market place, exhibition of sculptures and industrial installations as "objects trouvés"). The mixed **Robinia pseudoacacia** forest (net of movement and rest areas - picnic areas, adventures park, belvederes). The **Artificial wetlands** aiming to irrigate the whole area (rainwater deposits, macrofita) The **Hills** (main viewpoints – belvederes for the whole area and the observation of the fauna)

Planting as a structural tool organizes relationships and constitutes a network of densities and clearings that organically weave space. It is being used as an entrance marker, a filter and a mantle, in masses giving birth to enclosed or extrovert landscapes.

The lighting strategy is minimal in order to avoid visual pollution for the flora and fauna. As it is mainly a forest landscape only the main paths are mildly highlighted by low bollard type lamps made of corten steel. At the entrances and parking lots the lighting is supplemented by corten steel light posts.

Strategies for enhancing the biodiversity and the eco-connectivity have a prominent role in the project and seek at create new habitats as well as enhancing the existing ones. The main strategies are:

*forest habitats* - enrichment of existing forest masses – creating new ones with understories

*stream habitats* - strengthening the stream as a dominant ecological corridor and linking it with the forest masses

*Water habitats* - ditches and artificial wetlands: New water habitats through rainwater management play a key role in the ecological connectivity and biodiversity enhancement of all zones

*Agriculture zone habitats* – establishing new habitats that act as links between the existing ones

*Meadow habitats* – ecotones / preservation of the spatial quality of grassland clearings as a field of natural regeneration Water is an important element for increasing biodiversity as well as the project's sustainability.

A network is proposed consisting of:

Artificial wetlands purified by macrophytes for irrigation, collect rainwater, underground rainwater storage tanks, the stream is purified and enriched, canals – ditches at the slopes that create biodiversity zones and shelters for fauna bioswales adjacent to surfaces (roads, trails, parking lots) that retain temporary water, creating shallow seasonal wetlands. In the proposal, the landscape interventions are mild and the architectural elements proposed are dispersed throughout the landscape. The main architectural structures are:

**The cube:** a metallic-wooden construction with form flexibility. Its variety of form produces various spaces such as small commerce points, infopoints, kiosks, rest areas.

**The canopy:** rectangular construction of corten steel frame, with wooden paving and potential cube integration. It has a variety of forms and may be used as picnic area / barbecue area, changing rooms for the sport facilities, kiosk-bar.

**Picnic area platforms:** sitting elements composed of corten steel and timber

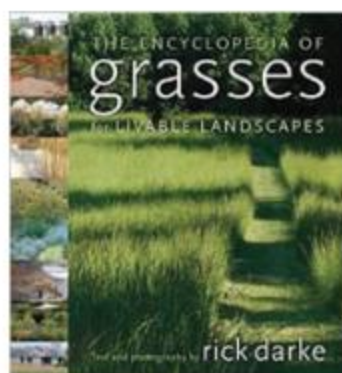
**Benches:** corten steel rectangles or cubes with timber seating

other corten equipment such as signage, litter bins, and lighting elements

It is a hybrid proposal that combines heritage and ecology. Topio7 proposes a new model of conservation for heritage European landscapes.



## BOOKS OF INTEREST



### THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF GRASSES FOR LIVABLE LANDSCAPES

Published date: April 1, 2007

ISBN: 9780881928174

Hardcover: 484 pages

Price: 258.00 AED

#### Books Description

In this new book noted grass expert and advocate Rick Darke addresses both the aesthetic qualities of grasses in private gardens and the opportunities and challenges of using them in wild and constructed public landscapes. All the true grasses, sedges, rushes, restios, and cattails that possess ornamental merit or that can contribute to ecological plantings are described, and practical matters of propagation, growth, and maintenance are also covered. More than 1000 stunning photographs show details of individual plants and hundreds of gardens and landscapes in which grasses play a prominent part. This worthy successor to The Color Encyclopedia of Ornamental Grasses is a new type of design reference that sets a standard for inspired, sustainable use of grasses



### LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE: A NEW POINT OF VIEW

Published date: November 7, 2013

ISBN: 9788415492566

Hardcover: 360 pages

Price: 350.00 AED

#### Books Description

This volume offers a complete collection of projects within the field of viewpoint architecture, an area that is consistently growing in importance in parallel with a growing sensitivity in society towards the spaces we inhabit. Presented here are examples of imaginative and innovative solutions applied to a wide variety of scales and contexts, illustrated with full-color photographs, notes, explanations, sketches and drawings provided by the architects themselves.



### MASTERPIECES: COURTYARD ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN

Published date: August 7, 2014

ISBN: 9783037681626

Hardcover: 304 pages

Price: 260.00 AED

#### Books Description

Courtyards are among the most versatile elements of architectural design. With their wide range of sizes and shapes, they are integral components of every conceivable type of constructional project. Some are reserved for private use while others serve the general public.

Basically, their main function consists of structuring a building and to provide illumination and ventilation to dense spatial depths. Beyond that, they provide an defined and protected outdoor space that in itself is part of the architectural or landscape design. Based on selected case studies, this volume presents the design diversity of courtyards, focusing in particular on their expedient multifaceted use





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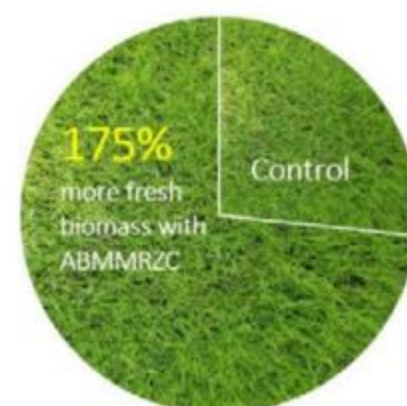
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